



County of Los Angeles CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

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WILLIAM T FUJIOKA
Chief Executive Officer

June 27, 2011

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To: Mayor Michael D. Antonovich
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From: William T Fujioka
Chief Executive Officer

MOTION TO SEND A FIVE-SIGNATURE LETTER EXPRESSING SERIOUS CONCERNS WITH IMPOSING ADDITIONAL LIMITATIONS ON THE AERIAL APPLICATION OF FIRE RETARDANT TO THE UNITED STATES FOREST SERVICE, SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE, CALIFORNIA SENATORS AND LOCAL CONGRESSIONAL MEMBERS (ITEM NO. 36-C, SUPPLEMENTAL AGENDA OF JUNE 28, 2011)

Item No. 36-C on the June 28, 2011 Supplemental Agenda is a motion by Supervisor Antonovich to send a five-signature letter to the United States Forest Service (USFS), the Secretary of Agriculture, California Senators and local Congressional members expressing the County's concerns with the imposition of additional limitations on the use of fire retardant, including when and where it can be authorized for aerial application.

In July 2010, a U.S. District Court in Montana directed the USFS to develop an environmental impact statement after the agency was sued with claims that fire retardant drops were harming waterways and aquatic life. The draft impact statement, which was released on May 13, 2011 by the USFS, began a 45-day public comment period which runs through June 27, 2011. The agency will consider public remarks submitted during the comment period in the development of the final environmental impact statement expected to be completed by December 31, 2011. Public comments will help inform the agency's decision whether to continue aerial application of fire retardant and, if so, under what conditions.

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective And Caring Service"

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According to the Fire Department, history shows that wildland fires do not respect jurisdictional boundaries. As a result, management policies and guidelines adopted by the USFS directly impact local communities and fire agencies. Placing further limitations on the current USFS policies and guidelines for the application of aerial retardant could potentially increase the size and cost of suppressing wildland fires that start in the Angeles National Forest.

The Fire Department further indicates that it has previously reported to the Board of Supervisors that it is strongly opposed to additional limitations to the USFS Aerial Retardant Guidelines because aerial retardant and gels have significantly assisted in the suppression of wildland fires by slowing the spread of fires and giving fire fighters the ability to keep fires small.

Approval of this motion to send a five-signature letter expressing concerns regarding additional limitations on the aerial application of fire retardant is consistent with existing Board policy which supports proposals that would increase fire prevention and fire safety, and would enhance the capabilities of fire departments to provide fire protection services.

WTF:RA
MR:KL:lm

c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
County Counsel
Fire Department